



University of Technology, Sydney

Research Thesis

The Role of Leadership in an Effective IT/Business Relationship

By

Alan Sixsmith

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that this thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Date

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

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Glossary

Acronym	Meaning
AD&M	Applications Development & Maintenance
BA	Business Analyst
BAM	Business Account Manager
BI	Business Improvement
BU	Business Unit
Capex	Capital budget allocation
C-level	Top level executives within the organization (eg., CEO, CIO)
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CIO	Chief Information Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
CTO	Chief Technology Officer
CG	Commercial Group
CIP	Capital Investment Plan
DBP	Detailed Budget Plan
DM	Demand Management
EA	Enterprise Architecture
DOTCOM	the period early in the year 2000 when share prices suddenly went down as hundreds of companies doing business on the internet failed or lost most of the value of their shares
FBP IT	Finance Business Partner for IT
FBPs	Finance Business Partners
FLT	Finance Leadership Team
FP&A	Financial Planning & Analysis
FPA	Financial Planning Analyst
GM	General Manager
GTC Inc	Global Telecommunications Provider
GTC Au	GTC Australia
GTC UK	GTC United Kingdom
GTC NZ	GTC New Zealand
GTC Group	GTC Group Headquarters
IBP	Integrated Business Plan
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IDC	International Data Corporation
IGB	Innovation Governance Board
IT	Information Technology
MIS	Management Information Systems
MPB	Multi Partner Board

PAD	Planning, Architecture and Demand
PG	Portfolio Group
PM	Project Manager
RM	Relationship Manager
SAD	Service Architecture and Design
SD	Solutions Delivery
SIF	Service Innovation Function
SLT	Sales Leadership Team
SO	Service Owner
SPB	Special Projects Board
SPMB	Strategic Portfolio Management Board
SSID	Service Strategy, Innovation and Design
TLT	The Technology Leadership Team
TP	Technology Planning
TS&P	Technology, Strategy and Planning

ABSTRACT

The conventional view of leadership is that of a phenomenon that enables an organization to establish and achieve its goals. In this respect, the literature portrays two main streams of leadership thought. Historically, based almost entirely on studies stemming from the positivist research paradigm, the notion of the heroic individual has prevailed, where, through superior traits, skills and qualities and with overarching control and influence over subordinates, a designated individual guides an organization to success. More recently, based upon studies stemming from the interpretivist and constructionist research paradigms, this notion of leadership has been challenged. Instead, a more collective notion of leadership is being proposed; one in which a contextually-contingent set of shared practices that are distributed throughout an organization, manifest appropriately in response to organizational challenges and needs.

Implicit in both of these notions of leadership is the importance of people to organizational success. In the heroic model of leadership, the individual leader mobilises his/her supporters through charisma and skill. In the collective model of leadership, the importance of *social relationships* is stressed and, in particular, the access which these provide to the relationship-based intangible resources (such as trust, commitment and resilience) required for organizational success. In both cases, people are motivated to collaborate in ways required to ensure organizational success and to express their 'collective intelligence' as a service to the organization.

This research, located within the interpretivist paradigm, explores the specific link between organizational leadership and a particular set of relationships – those between the IT function and the rest of the business - in a global telecommunications organization. Through a phenomenological case study, the dialectical relationship between leadership practices and the workplace relationships that constitute the IT-Business nexus, is explored in three of the operating companies of this organization. The rich interview data generated by this research portray the complex interplay between workplace

relationships and current leadership practices in each of these three operating companies; the analysis of which uncovers a number of spheres of influence that impact the IT-Business nexus. These influences include: the formal organizational structure and competing functional priorities; formal and informal leadership practices; organizational culture; and those social practices that either generate or mediate workplace tension.

The major contribution of the study is in its rich portrayal of the complex array of distributed leadership practices that influence business success within a large global organization. In particular, the study highlights the reciprocal relationship between these leadership practices and the IT-Business relationship, in particular, and other workplace relationships, more generally. In this respect, the research findings highlight the critical role that context plays in the effective execution of leadership practices; the absence of commentary on the importance of the relationship-based intangible resources in the IT-Business relationship literature; and the impact of more recent practices, such as that of outsourcing, on the IT-Business relationship.